Entry of the proposed amendment and reconsideration of the above-identified application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

REMARKS

Status of the Claims

Claim 7 has been finally rejected.

Claim 7 has been cancelled and new claim 8 proposed. Claim 7 has been re-written as new claim 8. Additional support for proposed new claim 8 can be found, inter alia, in the Specification at page 9, lines 11-19. No new matter has been added.

Proposed claim 8 is believed to be in condition for allowance, or in the alternative is believed to place the application in better condition for appeal. As such, Applicant respectfully requests entry of proposed new claim 8.

Objection to the Oath/Declaration

The Examiner has reiterated his objection to the oath stating that "[t]he C-I-P oath does not contain a reference to the parent application and is, therefore, objected to." Applicant again thanks the Examiner for pointing out this unintentional error. Applicant will file a corrected Declaration upon notification of allowable claims.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner has rejected claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as anticipated by Smith et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,428,759). This rejection has been rendered moot by the cancellation of claim 7. However, cancelled claim 7 has been re-written as new claim 8.

New claim 8 specifically recites:

> A method of reducing waste-water effluent stream produced during the conversion of trona ore into sodium bicarbonate... feeding said sodium carbonate decahydrate crystals directly to a sodium bicarbonate plant to convert said sodium carbonate decahydrate to sodium bicarbonate with the concomitant production of a third waste-water effluent stream, whereby the total amount of effluent waste-water in said second and third waste-water effluent streams is less than the amount of the effluent waste waster in said first waste water effluent stream.

See new claim 8 (emphasis added). Importantly, the present invention results in the reduction of waste-water effluent and feeds sodium carbonate decahydrate crystals directly for the production of sodium bicarbonate. In contrast, Smith et al. clearly melts the crystals by **adding water** prior to sodium bicarbonate production. According to Smith et al., "[t]he sodium carbonate decahydrate crystals so recovered can be melted by adding a small amount of water... [and] the solution formed by melting the crystals can be carbonated to form sodium bicarbonate." See Smith et al. at col. 9, line 67 through col. 10, line 10. Thus, not only does Smith et al. differ by using a liquefied form of sodium decahydrate but Smith et al. also adds additional water to the process. Nevertheless, the Examiner contends that inherently "the total amount of waste water from the production of sodium bicarbonate and also from the production of sodium carbonate decahydrate would be less than the amount of effluent stream from the production of sodium carbonate due to mass balance." See Office Action at page 3, sixth paragraph. However, Smith et al. does not teach or discuss that the total downstream

waste-water effluent is less than the amount of effluent waste water from sodium carbonate production. In fact, Smith et al. does not even recognize the importance of reducing the waste-water effluent from sodium bicarbonate production. Moreover, as stated hereinabove, Smith et al. **adds additional water** to the process.

Again, the present invention results in a reduction of waste-water effluent during the conversion of trona ore into sodium bicarbonate. Applicant kindly directs the Examiner's attention to the Example of the Present Invention disclosed in the Specification at page 11, line 4 through page 12, line 10, which demonstrates a reduction of about 19% in total waste-water effluent. According to the Example, "[f]or each of the waste-water stream consumed as feed into the decahydrate process according to the new process, there is generated 0.353 pounds of bitterns from the decahydrate process and 0.455 pounds of waste-water purge from the sodium bicarbonate process. Thus, total purging overall is 0.808 pounds, which is a reduction of about 19%." See Specification at page 11, lines 17-23.

As such, Applicant respectfully asserts that Smith et al. does not and cannot anticipate the presently claimed invention because Smith et al. does not teach or suggest all of the claim limitations of the presently claimed invention. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and reversal of this rejection.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

Phillip R. Kiefer
Reg. No. 55,326
Frenkel & Associates, P.C.
3975 University Drive, Suite 330
Fairfax, VA 22030
Telephone: (703) 246-9641
Facsimile: (703) 246-9646